

THE BLACK SASH

JOHANNESBURG ADVICE OFFICE REPORT

AUGUST TO OCTOBER 1975.

The Aid Centre in Johannesburg run by the Department of Bantu Administration is no longer dealing with black people who go there voluntarily for help. It seems that this is the result of a directive from the Chief Bantu Affairs Commissioner for Johannesburg and that in future the Aid Centre is to be allowed to deal only with people who are under arrest for pass law offences.

The Black Sash offices in other cities have not found the Aid Centres to be of any significance in assisting people in need of help and have reported that they seem to operate only as clearing centres designed to remove people from the urban areas to the homelands. But in Johannesburg we believe that the Aid Centre has helped many black people to break out of the vicious circle in which they were caught. The Manager, Mr. Bender, has always been ready at least to read submissions presented to him, to consider each case on its merits and, within the regulations, to assist people who were clearly unable to get a permit to be anywhere at all or those whose difficulties arose through misadventure or ignorance of the law.

There are many black people in the urban areas who have been unable to prove that they have a right to remain in terms of Section 10, or who have lost that right because they lived or worked temporarily in the wrong place and who have been endorsed out over and over again. But they cannot have a new appeal considered because no one in authority will listen to them. These people are arrested, imprisoned, released, refused registration in work and then are arrested again. They have no homeland to go to and no area where they are allowed to register as workseekers.

Already in the month which has gone by since people have been turned away from the Aid Centre workers in the Advice Office have noticed the difference. People are complaining that when they try to submit requests for their cases to be re-investigated they are told to go away; that they cannot appeal twice; that once the Chief Bantu Commissioner has disallowed an appeal they may not try again.

The Deputy Ministers of Bantu Administration and Development have stated on many occasions that they are concerned to streamline procedures, to remove unnecessary frustrations, to make life easier for urban people and for migrant workers. The Black Sash has always stated quite categorically that no amount of cosmetic action can remove the injustice and discrimination inherent in the pass laws. We have always maintained that to control the lives of the majority of our citizens through a system which demands that every black person must have a permit to be where he wishes to be and to do the ordinary things which all people desire to do and which denies all freedom of movement to millions of people, is so evil that it is totally unacceptable.

We have been/---

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We have been accused of cynicism because we have expressed doubts about the intentions and willingness of the Government to bring about real and meaningful change in the urban areas of the Republic. Nevertheless, we had hoped that the assistance given by the Aid Centre in Johannesburg and the evident concern its manager and staff would prove to be a first step in the right direction. It seems we were quite wrong in this. That such an attempt to bring some humanity and compassion into the system should have been so ruthlessly stamped out demonstrates that there is no real intention to work for change, that things will continue to go from bad to worse and that the cynicism lies more in the pious statements of the authorities whose deeds belie them, than in us.

CASES

MRS. A. T. first came to the Black Sash because she had been refused assistance by the Bantu Affairs Commissioner in applying for a travel document, which would enable her to emigrate to Mozambique to live in her husband's home. The Commissioner told her she could not apply for a passport in Johannesburg because she had no permit to be here in the first place. As her story unfolded it turned out that she had no permit to be anywhere and had only decided to try to leave the Republic because she had been unable to find a legal home for herself and her three children. She was born in Johannesburg but was orphaned when she was very young and was sent to her grandmother who lived on a white man's farm in the Free State. Her grandmother died and in 1971 she was chased off the farm by the owner. The Bantu Commissioner in the Free State refused to issue her with the reference book which the law demands that she carry, so she came to her uncle in Johannesburg. She was endorsed out but stayed because she had nowhere else to go. She married a Mozambique miner but of course, could not get a permit to live with him in Germiston where he works. When she came to us she had been trying for three years to regularise her position but no one would listen to her. She collected as much proof of her life history as she could find and submitted an affidavit to the Aid Centre. She is now registered in employment in Johannesburg and has a Lodger's permit to live with her uncle. She is at least near enough to her husband to enable him to visit her when he is off duty.

No one can claim that she is in any way satisfactorily settled or that this solution is anything other than horrifying but at least she can expect that her children will be allowed to attend school because their names are on her lodger's permit. Without the help of the Aid Centre, she might well have remained totally displaced, helpless and without hope for a better future for her children.

MISS. L. M. L. is a misplaced person. She has lived in Johannesburg since the time of her birth except for 14 months in 1973-74 when her employer transferred her to Bloemfontein. Her reference book only has Bloemfontein endorsements in it and when she tried to be registered in her Johannesburg

employment/---

employment, the Labour Officer looked only at the reference book and refused to read her affidavit or to look at the accompanying documents of proof. He just told her to go back to Bloemfontein where she has no relatives, friends or home. Hers is the kind of case where the assistance of the Aid Centre would have been invaluable. Now that this channel is no longer open to her she has not **even** been able to have her submissions considered.

MR. D. F. M. is caught in another kind of vicious circle. He is a misplaced person trying to get permission to work in Johannesburg. The Labour Officer told him to get a birth certificate, the registrar of births told him this application could not be accepted until the tax place in his reference book was changed, and the Bantu Commissioner to whom he applied for this to be done told him he must be fixed up by the Labour Officer first. Without the Aid Centre to unwind this bureaucratic tangle for him, he fears he will spend more years standing in queues at 80 Albert Street, at 15 Market Street, at 13 Newton Street, always being told to go somewhere else.

SHEENA DUNCAN
ADVICE OFFICE DIRECTOR.

JOHANNESBURG ADVICE OFFICE.

REPORT FOR AUGUST 1975.

FIGURES.

Working days : 20

Average number of interviews per day : 22,2

Cases successfully closed : 19 (9 men and 10 women)

There were 88 new cases which involved 177 interviews

There were 105 continuing cases do 156 do

There were 99 inquiries do 111 do

TOTAL 292

TOTAL 444

ANALYSIS.

<u>PROBLEM</u>	<u>NEW CASES</u>	<u>INQUIRIES</u>	<u>TOTALS</u>
Ordered to leave the area	23	4	27
Issue of reference books	4	2	6
Housing Problems	14	29	43
Foreigners	5	3	8
Work Permits	8	12	20
Residential Permits	26	7	33
Section 10 Qualifications	3	1	4
Ex Prisoners	-	-	-
Contract Problems	1	10	11
Miscellaneous	4	31	35

JOHANNESBURG ADVICE OFFICE

REPORT FOR SEPTEMBER 1975.

FIGURES.

Working days : 21

Average number of interviews per day : 19,5

Cases successfully closed : 17 (7 men and 10 women)

There were 92 new cases	which involved 160 interviews
do 102 continuing cases	do 150 do
do 98 inquiries	do 100 do
<u>TOTAL 292</u>	<u>TOTAL 410</u>

ANALYSIS.

<u>PROBLEM</u>	<u>NEW CASES</u>	<u>INQUIRIES</u>	<u>TOTALS</u>
Ordered to leave the area	14	5	19
Issue of reference books	9	3	12
Housing problems	9	26	35
Foreigners	4	5	9
Work permits	13	17	30
Residential Permits	22	7	29
Section 10 qualifications	12	2	14
Ex Prisoners	1	1	2
Contract Problems	2	2	4
Miscellaneous	6	30	36

N.B. 20 of the above were married couples who cannot get permission to live together.

JOHANNESBURG ADVICE OFFICE

REPORT FOR OCTOBER 1975.

FIGURES.

Working days : 22

Average number of interviews per day : 19

Cases successfully closed : 20 (8 women and 12 men)

There were	85	new cases	which involved	179	interviews
do	95	continuing cases	do	145	do
do	86	inquiries	do	94	do
TOTAL	<u>266</u>		TOTAL	<u>418</u>	

ANALYSIS

<u>PROBLEM</u>	<u>NEW CASES</u>	<u>INQUIRIES</u>	<u>TOTALS</u>
Ordered to leave the area	19	10	29
Issue of reference books	6	2	8
Housing Problems	6	15	21
Foreigners	7	6	13
Work Permits	3	14	17
Residential permits	27	5	32
Section 10 qualifications	7	1	8
Ex Prisoners	1	2	3
Contract Problems	1	10	11
Miscellaneous	8	21	29

N.B. 22 of the above were married couples who cannot get permission to live together.